ing its look and feel, the Commercial Rate Card is being revised/restructured and steps have been taken to fully exploit the commercial potential of various programmes.

Diversion of Funds meant for AIDS and TB Programmes

*530. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large sum from the funds provided by G-8 countries for fighting AIDS and TB in India is proposed to be diverted towards purchase of a failed AIDS vaccine named Vexgen; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Reform linked Funds for Urban Infrastructure Development

*533. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that reform linked funds announced by Government to improve urban infrastructure have not taken off so far;

(b) if so, the details of the schemes;

(c) the reasons for their failure in implementation; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) to (d) Finance Minister, in his Budget Speech of 2002-03, announced setting up of an Urban Reform Incentive Fund (URIF), with an initial allocation of Rs. 500 crores, which is proposed to be released as Additional Central Assistance (ACA) in Annual Plans of the States. Planning Commission worked out State-wise alloations on the basis of share of each State in the urban population and included the same as part of States' resources, while fixing the size of Annual Plan 2002-2003. The process of release is to be initiated by States individually, entering into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Central Government. This position has been brought to the no-

tice of all State Governments and the draft Memorandum of Agreement to be entered into has been circulated to them in July, 2002. In the MoA to be signed, it has been proposed that in the first phase, the urban reforms would address the following areas :—

(i) Repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act at the State level by Resolution;

(ii) Rationalisation of Stamp Duty in phases to bring it down to no more than 5% by the end of the Tenth Plan period;

(iii) Reform of Rent Control Laws to remove rent control so as to stimulate private investment in rental housing;

(iv) Introduction of computerized processes of registration;

(v) Reform of Property Tax so that it may become a major source of revenue of urgan local bodies, and arrangements for its effective implementation so that collection efficiency reaches at least 85% by the end of 10th Plan period;

(vi) Levy of reasonable user charges by Urban Local Bodies, with the objective that full cost of Operation & Maintenance is collected by the end of the Tenth Plan period;

(vii) Introduction of double entry system of accounting in Urban Local Bodies.

This issue was also deliberated upon in the Housing Ministers' Conference held on 12.9.2002. General consensus was that urban reforms is a lengthy process and reforms cannot be thrust upon the States, nor can these be done, all at once. Some States have shown willingness to sign for some of the reform areas, while not agreeing to implement the other reform areas. Other States are yet to send their comments. On the basis of the responses received, it has, now, been proposed to assign weightages to each reform area and allow truncated MoA to be signed between the State Government and Central Government. So far, no release has been made because the scheme is under finalization in consultation with the concerned Ministries and as such, no State has yet been able to sign the Memorandum of Agreement. The scheme has been continued during the second year on the Tenth Five Year Plan.